

The Gospel & Our Truest Identity

Today we begin a series on the Gospel & our Truest Identity. Over the summer I wrestled with why defeat often seems more common than victory in the Christian life. We are a people who like control, and I fear as a consequence we have developed a “christianity” that only works in a “controlled” environment. Raise the temperature a few degrees and we begin to sweat, spiritually. Is God good? Am I bad?, etc. We are called to a Christianity that is designed to work in the wild. Christianity that only works in a “controlled” environment lacks depth. A Christianity that works in the wild requires intimacy and passion. I want for you and for me a Christianity that is capable of producing joy in the midst of a raging storm. That is our quest. The good news is we need not look any further than the Good News, the Gospel of Jesus Christ. To begin, a deeper understanding of the Gospel requires an understanding of why God created the world we live in and why He created us. This will lead us to our purpose, our identity and our game plan for life in a fallen world.

Just in case, here is the big picture: God created everything to display His glory.

Mark 1:1 The beginning of the **gospel of Jesus Christ**, the Son of God.

Acts 8:35 Then Philip opened his mouth, and beginning with this Scripture he told him **the good news about Jesus**.

Acts 10:36 As for the word that he sent to Israel, preaching **good news of peace through Jesus Christ** (he is Lord of all),

Why or for what purpose did God create us?

Isaiah 43:1 But now thus says the LORD, **he who created you, O Jacob, he who formed you, O Israel: “Fear not, for I have redeemed you; I have called you by name, you are mine.**

Isaiah 43:2 When you pass through the waters, **I will be with you;** and through the rivers, they shall not overwhelm you; when you walk through fire you shall not be burned, and the flame shall not consume you.

Isaiah 43:3 For I am the LORD your God, the Holy One of Israel, **your Savior**. I give Egypt as your ransom, Cush and Seba in exchange for you.

Isaiah 43:4 **Because you are precious in my eyes, and honored, and I love you,** I give men in return for you, peoples in exchange for your life.

Isaiah 43:5 **Fear not, for I am with you;** I will bring your offspring from the east, and from the west I will gather you.

Isaiah 43:6 I will say to the north, Give up, and to the south, Do not withhold; bring my sons from afar and my daughters from the end of the earth,

Isaiah 43:7 **everyone who is called by my name, whom I created for my glory, whom I formed and made.”**

We are created for God's glory. That does not mean we run around doing things that bring glory to God. God already possesses all glory. He out of love choose to display His glory for us to see and praise.

Isaiah 42:8 I am the LORD; that is my name; my glory I give to no other, nor my praise to carved idols.

Psalms 19:1 The **heavens declare the glory of God,** and the sky above proclaims his handiwork.

“While estimates among different experts vary, an acceptable range is between 100 billion and 200 billion galaxies” **Mario Livio**, astrophysicist at the Space Telescope Science Institute in Baltimore

Psalms 8:3 When I look at your heavens, the work of your fingers, the moon and the stars, which you have set in place,

Psalms 8:4 **what is man that you are mindful of him, and the son of man that you care for him?**

Romans 1:18 For the wrath of God is revealed from heaven against all ungodliness and unrighteousness of men, who by their unrighteousness **suppress the truth.**

Romans 1:19 For **what can be known about God is plain to them, because God has shown it to them.**

Romans 1:20 For his invisible attributes, namely, his eternal power and divine nature, have been clearly perceived, **ever since the creation of the world, in the things that have been made.** So they are without excuse.

Ephesians 1:4 even as **he chose us in him before the foundation of the world,** that we should be **holy and blameless before him.** In love

Ephesians 1:5 **he predestined us** for adoption as sons **through Jesus Christ,** according to the purpose of his will,

Ephesians 1:6 **to the praise of his glorious grace,** with which he has blessed us in the Beloved.

Ephesians 1:7 In him we have **redemption through his blood, the forgiveness of our trespasses,** according to the riches of his grace,

Ephesians 1:8 which **he lavished upon us,** in all wisdom and insight

Ephesians 1:9 **making known to us the mystery of his will,** according to his purpose, **which he set forth in Christ**

Ephesians 1:10 **as a plan for the fullness of time,** to unite all things in him, things in heaven and things on earth.

“He chose us before the foundation of the world to the praise of His glorious grace. This predestination to the praise of the glory of God’s grace happened “through Jesus Christ.” In the eternal fellowship of the Trinity, the Father and the Son planned that God’s grace would be supremely revealed through the saving work of the Son.”

John Piper’s summary of Ephesians 1:4-10

Ephesians 2:7 so that in the **coming ages he might show the immeasurable riches of his grace in kindness toward us in Christ Jesus.**

2Timothy 1:9 who **saved us and called us to a holy calling, not because of our works but because of his own purpose and grace, which he gave us in Christ Jesus before the ages began,**

2Timothy 1:10 and which now has been **manifested through the appearing of our Savior Christ Jesus, who abolished death and brought life and immortality to light through the gospel,**

John 14:6 Jesus said to him, "I am the way, and the truth, and the life. **No one comes to the Father except through me.**

Revelation 20:15 And if anyone's name was **not found written in the book of life, he was thrown into the lake of fire.**

Revelation 13:8 and all who dwell on earth will worship it, everyone whose name has not been written **before the foundation of the world in the book of life of the Lamb who was slain.**

2Corinthians 4:4 In their case the god of this world has blinded the minds of the unbelievers, **to keep them from seeing the light of the gospel of the glory of Christ,** who is the image of God.

Revelation 5:3 And no one in heaven or on earth or under the earth was able to open the scroll or to look into it,

Revelation 5:9 And they sang a new song, saying, "**Worthy are you to take the scroll and to open its seals, for you were slain, and by your blood you ransomed people for God from every tribe and language and people and nation,**

Romans 9:22 What if God, **desiring to show his wrath and to make known his power,** has endured with much patience vessels of wrath prepared for destruction,

Romans 9:23 **in order to make known the riches of his glory for vessels of mercy, which he has prepared beforehand for glory —**

Acts 17:24 The God who made the world and everything in it, being Lord of heaven and earth, does not live in temples made by man,

Acts 17:25 nor is he served by human hands, **as though he needed anything**, since he himself **gives to all mankind life and breath and everything**.

2Corinthians 3:18 And we all, with unveiled face, **beholding the glory of the Lord**, are being **transformed into the same image** from one degree of glory to another. **For this comes from the Lord who is the Spirit**.

1Corinthians 13:12 For **now we see in a mirror dimly**, but then face to face. **Now I know in part; then I shall know fully, even as I have been fully known**.

1John 3:2 Beloved, **we are God's children now**, and **what we will be has not yet appeared**; but we know that when he appears **we shall be like him, because we shall see him as he is**.

Romans 8:29 For those whom he foreknew he also predestined to **be conformed to the image of his Son**, in order that he might be the firstborn among many brothers.

Philippians 1:6 And I am sure of this, **that he who began a good work in you will bring it to completion** at the day of Jesus Christ.

Romans 1:7 To all those in Rome who are **loved by God and called to be saints**: Grace to you and peace from God our Father and the Lord Jesus Christ.

Romans 1:8 First, I thank my God through Jesus Christ for all of you, **because your faith is proclaimed in all the world**.

Romans 1:15 So I am eager to **preach the gospel to you** also who are in Rome.

1Corinthians 15:1 Now **I would remind you**, brothers, **of the gospel** I preached to you, which you received, **in which you stand**,

Romans 16:25 Now to him who is able to **strengthen you according to my gospel** and the **preaching of Jesus Christ**, according to the **revelation of the mystery that was kept secret for long ages**

Romans 5:2 Through him we have also obtained access by faith into this grace in which we stand, and **we rejoice in hope of the glory of God.**

Psalms 34:8 Oh, **taste and see that the LORD is good!** Blessed is the man who takes refuge in him!

“this world exists for the glory of God’s grace revealed in the saving work of Jesus.”
John Piper

Therefore, when we go out from a motive of trying to do something to gain God’s favor we are engaging in wicked behavior. We are saying that rather than resting in finished work of Jesus Christ and confidently sitting in the presence of God to take in His glory to our deepest delight, we are denigrating His grace by thinking our actions can improve our standing. Be warned: “I am the LORD; that is my name; my glory I give to no other”

God created the world for his glory. God created us to see and enjoy and display His glory. The Gospel is the means that we gain access into that glory but what comprises the Gospel, Jesus shed blood for sinners, is the greatest display of the glory of God.

Our calling is basically to dine at the best restaurant or vacation at the most fabulous resort or enjoy an exquisite wine and then declare the glory of the experience, not under compulsion but out of joy.